

House Republican Press Release

April 30, 2004
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Boucher Votes No On State Budget



Opposes Hiking Rail Fares and Spending Newfound Surplus

As promised, State Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143rd, Wilton, Norwalk, voted against legislation that increases the previously adopted state budget for the 2005 fiscal year, hikes rail fares by 5.5 percent and spends a projected \$224 million state budget surplus.

“Over a period of two years, commuters have been assessed a 20 percent increase in monthly ticket prices, 15 percent last year and now another 5.5 percent after a horrendous winter when commuters suffered with one third of the rail cars out of service.”

“We need to address problems in rail service, and reprioritize state spending,” Rep. Boucher said. “These commuters are many of the people who contribute heavily to the state’s \$14 billion state budget and the unexpected surplus now projected for this fiscal year.”

Rep. Boucher added, “Like some towns that may be downgraded by bond rating agencies for not setting enough aside in reserves and thereby increasing their borrowing costs, the state may be further jeopardizing its already reduced bond rating. This always has the effect of increasing taxes on us and our future taxpayers.”

The budget measure was adopted, however, by majorities in both the House and Senate and now goes to the governor for signature.

Rep. Boucher criticized the legislature’s continuation of short-term tax increases that were scheduled to end on July 1. “This budget institutionalizes \$1.2 billion in tax increases, it provides no relief and makes what were supposed to be temporary tax increases permanent,” Rep. Boucher added. “The lesson of this budget is that the majority of the legislature cannot keep its word when it imposes a short-term tax increases.”

Most of all, Boucher criticized the spending of the budget surplus that was forecast just days ago after people filed 2004 income tax returns in April. Previously, the state has experienced \$1 billion deficits over the past two fiscal years.

“Any responsible household or small business after living through two bad years would put aside a newfound surplus for the uncertainties of the future,” said Rep. Boucher. “State government should take the same fiscally responsible approach. That would make common sense.”

Prior to voting no on the budget adjustment bill, Rep. Boucher supported several amendments that attempted to add more fiscal responsibility to the budget, including starting to replenish the state’s Rainy Day Fund.